

SITUATION REPORT NO. 9
INCIDENT NO. 2002-040
DATE: July 1, 2002 TIME: 5:30 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Drought/Fires - Dry conditions in areas of high fuel content have increased fire and drought conditions throughout North Dakota.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: To date, the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has received reports of two fatalities and five injuries, which occurred during response to rural fires.
3. DAMAGES: On July 1, the National Weather Service (NWS) indicated very dry conditions, combined with strong northwest winds gusting to approximately 30 miles per hour (mph), will create dangerous fire conditions over most of southern North Dakota. Because the potential exists for grass fires to quickly grow out of control, the NWS issued a Red Flag Warning for the following 12 counties: Bowman, Adams, Hettinger, Grant, Morton, Burleigh, Oliver, Emmons, Logan, McIntosh, Dickey and LaMoure.

Adams County firefighters responded to five fires during June 26-July 1. On June 26, a small area of grasslands burned north of Hettinger near the airport. Equipment used to mow the grass may have caused the fire. Two fires occurred June 28 in Adams County. The Adams County Landfill was reported burning at approximately 5 a.m.; it rekindled on June 29 and was extinguished. Lightning caused a fire that burned 200 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres 15 miles north of the N.D. Highway 8 and U.S. Highway 12 junction. On June 29, a structural fire destroyed a machine shop and a small area of grass and trees 10 miles northwest of Lemmon, S.D., in Adams County. On July 1, a grass fire was reported near the town of Haynes, six miles west of the N.D. Highway 8 and U.S. Highway 12 junction. The Lemmon and Hettinger Fire Departments were responding.

On June 28 in Logan County, lightning caused a fire that burned 120 acres of pasture 10 miles southwest of Napoleon. Due to several flare-ups, the fire was not extinguished until June 29. Also on June 29, approximately seven hay bales burned 10 miles north of Napoleon. A small grass fire started by fireworks at a farm four miles southeast of Napoleon was quickly contained. The Napoleon Fire Department responded to all the blazes. On June 29, the Gackle Fire Department contained a 40-acre fire, southwest of Gackle.

In Morton County during June 28-29, the Mandan Rural Fire Department responded to 13 fires, the Hebron Fire Department to four fires, the Glen Ullin Fire Department to three fires, and the New Salem Fire Department to one blaze.

Several small grass fires occurred in Wells County near Manfred on June 30. Harvey and Fessenden Fire Departments and the Wells County Sheriff's Office responded.

On July 1, the State EOC received a report of a fire in McIntosh County approximately one mile east and 2.5 miles south of Wishek on N.D. Highway 13.

N.D. Department of Human Services officials toured the city of Shields on July 1. They estimate 16 people were living in the town, where three occupied homes were destroyed. Buildings remaining include the post office, bar and one residence.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Local firefighters, law enforcement officials, and private citizens responded to fires throughout the southwest and south central portions of North Dakota during June 28-30.

STATE: State agencies monitoring fire conditions include the Governor's Office, the N.D. Forest Service, the N.D. National Guard, the N.D. Parks and Recreation Department, the N.D. Fire Marshal's Office, the N.D. Game and Fish Department, State Radio Communications, the N.D. Department of Human Services, the N.D. Highway Patrol, the N.D. Aeronautics Commission, the N.D. Department of Transportation and the N.D. Division of Emergency Management.

FEDERAL: Agencies providing fire-fighting resources include the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

The National Weather Service (NWS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are monitoring fire conditions.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: Eight American Red Cross volunteers, along with 20 local volunteers, have been feeding response personnel and evacuees.

Prairie Knights Casino and Lodge staff provided an additional night of lodging for senior citizens from Porcupine who lacked air conditioning in their homes.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: On July 1, Governor John Hoeven issued a drought emergency declaration for the state of North Dakota. The declaration was a result of his June 28 tour of south central and southwestern North Dakota. The purpose of the declaration is to call attention to federal officials the plight of farmers and ranchers in southern North Dakota regarding crop, hay and pasture losses that have negatively impacted the livestock and North Dakota's economy and have prevented emergence and development of crops. Additionally, the Governor is contacting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency and the Secretary of Agriculture to discuss the potential for haying CRP acres in North Dakota and establishing adjustments to the federal crop insurance procedures for paying claims.

As of 9:00 p.m. on June 30, the Fort Yates Command Center reported the all fires were contained with small flare-ups handled by crews currently in a mop-up role. The Again Fire (Porcupine and Shields) has three engines and a 10-man crew available. The Bale fire (Cannonball), the Twin fire (north of Ft. Yates) and the Kenel fire (Kenel, SD) have two engines each to fight flare-ups. The number of engines used to combat the fires included four from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service (FWS), one from a private individual, one from the N.D. Forest Service, one from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and 15 from the BIA.

In response to a request from the American Red Cross, the Department of Human Services, through the West Central Human Service Center, agreed to provide mental health services on site in Grant and Sioux Counties. The Mental Health Division has offered to provide onsite training to church, civic and government groups, as well as individuals. The purpose will be to teach recognition and coping mechanisms to deal with stress related to the effects of a disaster.

Two 550-gallon tankers from the N.D. Department of Transportation (NDDOT) returned from Porcupine to Bismarck. These tankers, as well as a 3,500- and a 6,000-gallon tanker, are on stand-by in Bismarck. The Dickinson and Valley City Districts each have a 6,000-gallon tanker on standby.

The North Dakota National Guard also continues to have engineering and aerial support equipment and water distribution vehicles available to support existing and potential fire operations.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from the previous report.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from the previous report.
9. OTHER: Appropriate state, local, tribal, federal and private entity emergency operations plans (EOPs) and procedures have been implemented.

The N.D. Rural Fire Mitigation Guide is posted on the N.D. Division of Emergency Management web site at: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem/>.

Information regarding fire weather forecasts can be found on the National Weather Service (NWS) web site at: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/fire.htm>.

Situation Reports published by N.D. Division of Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director